

**REMARKS FOR  
READ C. VAN DE WATER  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
FOR  
AVIATION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
  
GW UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT  
ON AVIATION SAFETY & SECURITY  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**March 3, 2003**

**Thank you for that kind introduction. And thank you all for coming to this very important summit on aviation safety and security.**

**Secretary Mineta has asked me to thank you for your willingness to work with us, especially in the area of security. He is genuinely grateful for the support you've given, not only to air carriers with operations to the United States, but operations worldwide. Since the tragic events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, aviation security is a global concern and responsible nations are rising to the challenge. We understand fully the challenges that increased security measures have imposed.**

**Your efforts, and those of the aviation industry, continue to ensure a concerned traveling public that their flights are indeed secure.**

**I don't need to recite to you the enormous contribution that the aviation industry gives to our countries. But, I will. It is important to remind ourselves, as we confront added burdens and costs, why we are doing it. We are doing it because international aviation provides invaluable opportunities for travel, for new businesses, for jobs and for the general growth and development of our economies. If anyone ever doubted the importance of aviation to economic growth, the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the economic downturn that followed straightened them out.**

**Our good friends at the George Washington University Consortium always knew this. The vision for this conference pre-dated the stark realities of today's aviation world forged**

**from September 11<sup>th</sup>. Safety and security of air transportation has always been the foundation upon which commercial air services rest. Every country needs to keep planes flying, and people and cargo moving between nations safely, efficiently and securely.**

**The United States, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia have enormous interests at stake in making our aviation relationships work. Existing and future trade provides huge numbers of jobs, and hundreds of millions of dollars of income to workers, businesses and investors. We share citizens and broad cultural ties. Ours are markets that cannot be neglected, or threatened. We have a saying back at the Department, “you can’t trade if you can’t get there.” There could be a modification that “you won’t trade if you fear getting there.” It is the burden of governments of all countries to dispel fears and concerns for the safety and security of commercial flight.**

**If we, as government officials, are to encourage travelers and businesses to continue to use air transportation in order to achieve our broader economic and social goals, we must require the highest standards for the safe and secure operation of air transportation. The continued threat of terrorist activities simply does not allow for any reduction of current measures of aviation security. The enduring requirement for sound safety oversight of aircraft operations and crew insists that an autonomous regulatory body impose high standards on flight operations. We believe that these goals are common to all governments. The work of the International Civil Aviation Organization ratifies our belief.**

**For example, we, meaning the international community, recognized the need to immediately to address the new security issues posed by the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Just weeks after the terrible events, ICAO convened its 33<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly.**

**The attendees condemned the use of civil aviation as a weapon and recommended that ICAO create a universal audit program to ensure that countries around the world continue to protect the civil aviation system.**

**ICAO was directed to host a high-level ministerial conference on civil aviation security to address the new vulnerabilities and challenges exposed by the terrorist acts of September 11<sup>th</sup>. To underscore the importance of this topic, Ministers and other high-level officials from 154 countries and 24 international organizations attended ICAO's Conference on Civil Aviation Security in February, 2002.**

**The Conference endorsed the creation of a mandatory and systematic aviation security audit program. The program was developed by ICAO, drawing upon proven and successful concepts used in existing programs. Security audits will determine each nation's compliance with international**

**standards by observing measures at airports and assessing each nation's capabilities to sustain those measures. True to its commitment for rapid implementation, ICAO has begun its audit program starting with Uganda in December of last year.**

**The creation of a security audit program under the auspices of ICAO is a significant accomplishment. However, the global aviation system is only as strong as the international standards and measures that support it. The Conference directed ICAO to strengthen and enhance security standards and measures in order to deal effectively with existing, as well as the new and emerging, threats to international civil aviation.**

**Shifting to the topic of aviation safety oversight, this type of audit system has been in place at ICAO for years. At this point, ICAO has assessed the safety oversight regimes of virtually every member country in the world to determine compliance with its international standards. Reports are**

**issued from which plans of action to correct deficiencies may be drawn. Technical assistance is available from ICAO and often from the FAA to implement plans of action.**

**This week's conference is designed to complement the ICAO standards by bringing together aviation leaders so that you can form partnerships with each other, and with us, to make sure that all of our interests are addressed, that our safety and security needs are met, and that our economies continue to grow. Ours is, indeed, a true partnership between the United States and each of your countries.**

**Again, Secretary Mineta sends his regards and thanks each of you for making the time to come here for this conference. We look forward to hearing the results of your deliberations at this summit.**

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